UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.12/1998/SR.15
11 May 1998

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Eighteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 6 May 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. CEAUSU
(Vice-Chairperson)

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GE.98-16013 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS:

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Second periodic report of the Netherlands (continued) (E/1990/6/Add.11, 12 and 13; HRI/CORE/1/Add.66, 67 and 68; E/C.12/Q/NET/1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of the Netherlands took places at the Committee table.

Article 12 (continued)

2. Mr. SADI said that the Netherlands Government appeared to have achieved a dramatic success in reducing alcohol consumption in the country over the past decade. He wondered whether similar policies were being applied in connection with smoking and the consumption of drugs. In a second question relating to the use of pesticides, insecticides and other chemicals in agriculture, he asked whether the Netherlands Government was pursuing an affirmative policy to promote organically grown agricultural produce.

3. Mr. ANTANOVICH asked whether the Government's alcohol licensing bill had already been introduced in Parliament, and if so, how it had been received. Referring to question 59 of the list of issues (E/C.12/Q/NET/1), he asked how the AIDS situation had developed since 1995. Was the epidemic still spreading rapidly?

4. Mr. TEXIER inquired into the health situation of prison inmates. Was medical care dispensed by special prison doctors or by ordinary doctors from outside? He understood that the Ministry of Justice was planning to introduce certain improvements and wondered where matters currently stood.

5. Mr. RIEDEL, also referring to the question of health care for the prison population, said he understood that the National Ombudsman had expressed concern at the fact that members of prison medical staff were also required to carry out certain law enforcement tasks. What had been done to remedy that situation in the two years since the report had been prepared?

6. Mr. WIMER, noting that the positions of European countries on the question of drug policy varied widely, asked whether the Netherlands Government was contemplating any change in its position in the light of new developments within the European Union.

7. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands), replying to the last question, said that he could not go into the political aspects of his country's drugs policies, which went beyond the scope of the Convention. He was, however, able to confirm that his country was fully in line with those of its European Union partners. If, at some time in the past, relations with France and other countries had been less than perfect in that respect, he could assure the Committee that all was now in order and a fruitful, practical dialogue was taking place with

France and other European Union (EU) countries. While it was not yet possible to speak of an all-European drugs policy, the EU countries were working towards one. A growing acceptance of certain successes of the Dutch approach had recently been noted in countries such as Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

8. As pointed out earlier, that approach was based on a combination of health care and harm reduction measures, with private consumption of marijuana receiving the lowest priority in terms of prosecution. Pragmatism was the keyword of his Government's policies, which were based on the recognition that drug use formed part of modern society and that an exclusive focus on suppression and law enforcement brought no results unless it was combined with measures on the demand side. Having said that, however, he wished to emphasize that policies operated in the Netherlands could not be directly copied in countries with a different social structure, such as France.

9. Ms. GORIS (Netherlands), replying to a question raised by Mr. Ahmed at the previous meeting, said that a new system governing access to health care for illegal immigrants was to come into force in July 1998. At present, access to medical assistance and health-care facilities was open to everyone in the country, irrespective of their residence status. However, the patient was in principle liable for the costs of any health care received. Persons without health insurance and unable to afford medical help could obtain such help under the National Assistance Act. The new system, which linked residence status with benefit entitlement, was not intended to make health care inaccessible to illegal immigrants, but only to keep the costs of medical care for that sector of the population separate from the rest. Under the new system, it would be up to the medical practitioner to decide whether health care was essential in view of the individual's mental or physical condition.

10. In some cases, the care provider would be able to obtain reimbursement from a newly founded private fund, to which the Government was to contribute the sum of 11 billion guilders a year. Essential cases would include life-threatening diseases, diseases involving a threat to the health of third parties, infectious diseases, serious psychological disorders, and maternity and infant health care. An evaluation of the new system would be conducted after two years.

11. Replying to Mr. Sadi's question on the use of pesticides and other chemicals, she said that the Netherlands had no specific policy other than that reflected in legislation at the EU level. On the subject of AIDS, she said that, contrary to earlier fears, the disease had not developed into a full-scale epidemic. The total number of diagnosed cases by 1 January 1997 had been 4,288, the assumption being that some 70 per cent of patients had died. The most recent statistical material showed a decrease in the number of homosexual men with AIDS; an increase was, however, observed among heterosexual women.

12. Answers to other questions would be provided at the next meeting.

Article 13

13. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands), replying to suggestions that his Government should endeavour to make secondary education free of charge, said that, in his view, a Government's first responsibility was to ensure that secondary education was provided to all those who qualified and that no one was forced out of secondary education for financial reasons. That was precisely what the Netherlands Government was doing. On the question of free education, the views of Parliament and of society at large had to be taken into consideration. It could be argued that beyond the school-leaving age, which in the Netherlands was 16 years, the nature of government responsibility changed and the decision concerning further education should be left to the parents and children. Another argument of a basically political kind related to the extent to which society should invest in educating its human potential. There again, the Government's major concern was to ensure the availability of higher education to all individuals qualified to receive it.

14. Mr. RIEDEL, referring to paragraph 275 of the report (E/1990/6/Add.1), asked who decided whether a child should receive ordinary or special primary education. Were both forms of education free of charge in line with the Covenant? Referring to paragraph 298, he asked whether the admissions boards which decided whether or not a pupil should be admitted to secondary school were required to consult the views of the parents. The decision was crucial to the child's future and changing a fait accompli was always difficult. What was the Government's position in that regard? Referring to paragraph 278, which spoke of measures designed to reduce truancy, he asked whether imposing fines had yielded any results. Noting that ethnic minorities accounted for a large share of school truancy cases in his own country, he asked whether the same was true of the Netherlands.

15. Turning to the subject of higher education, he asked whether the introduction of a system of interest-free student loans that had to be repaid by students who failed to graduate had affected the study choices of women students and of students from lower and middle-income groups. Had it affected the number of students actually admitted to university, and was there now a trend away from university studies? What was the standard total budget for the average student in the Netherlands?

16. Did the different scale of tuition fees established for part-time students and students without grants, to which the delegation had referred the previous day in connection with the "polder model", mean that there would be no progressive introduction of free education, which should be provided under article 13.2 (c) of the Covenant?

17. It appeared from all the material provided, including that from the NGOs, that by progressively changing the status quo the Government had worsened the situation in respect of the undertaking to which it was bound by international law. It was precisely that international law obligation which should progressively be realized, and since the economic situation was so much better than in the period 1975-1978 when the change had been introduced, there should be no increase in those figures.

18. Mr. THAPALIA asked, against the background of article 13.2 (a) and (b) of the Covenant, of the Commentary by the Dutch section of the International Commission of Jurists concerning paragraph 319 of the second periodic report of the Netherlands, as reproduced in the Country Analysis (E/C.12/A/NET/1), and of information on tuition fee increases provided by a Students' organization in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee, how the Netherlands' educational policy complied with the principle of free education. Did the policy of accessibility to higher education not constitute a retrogressive step in relation to the standards of the Covenant? Had the Government introduced human rights education for the armed forces, police and prison authorities? Lastly, with reference to the Government's reply to question 19 of the list of issues, what percentage of the budget was allocated to the education of physically and mentally disabled children and what was the number of children involved?

19. Mr. GRISSA said that in view of the correlation between the levels of education and employment, the Committee would find it useful to have a breakdown of the figures for unemployed early school leavers by income group both for children of Dutch families and children of foreign workers.

20. Ms. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO suggested that there should also be a breakdown by gender.

21. Mr. ANTANOVICH said that the educational reform with a view to a more flexible response to market demands was impressive. It had been stated in the reply to question 22 of the list of issues that secondary school pupils were given increasing responsibility for planning their own work, worked more on their own or in groups, carried out assignments and so forth. Were all secondary schools granted that right regardless of their performance ratings?

22. Mr. TEXIER asked whether the literacy and numeracy rates among school leavers caused a problem and, if so, whether there were any special programmes designed to improve the situation?

23. Mr. ADEKUOYE asked how the charging of tuition fees to students over the age of 16 could be justified in view of the goal of compatibility between national legislation and the Covenant. What was the philosophy behind charging fees at a time when the economy was booming and there was no apparent economic need for the Government to do so?

24. Mr. SADI asked whether there was any religious education at the primary and secondary school levels and what the Government's policy on religious education was.

25. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether older or retired people could pursue studies at various levels, including university. Was their considerable experience used to advantage anywhere? Could they become professor emeritus in a university, for example, as they could in Spain?

26. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands) said that, with regard to the charge that the Netherlands refused free education to the over-16s when its economy was booming, the delegation had received a letter from a students' organization containing figures which required some explanation.

27. Under the Netherlands' system, education for the over-16s was not dependent on the financial status of the parents, contrary to the system in many other countries: grants were available to all and, in cases where parents were unable to provide support, a further grant could be applied for. Other forms of support available to students, including free or concessionary travel and housing subsidies for accommodation other than in students' residences or the parental home, had not been mentioned in the letter. Medical care was also provided in many cases through specialized services within the university.

28. Furthermore the comparisons made in the letter did not take into account the fact that the cost of living in the Netherlands was lower than in many of the surrounding countries, that in many countries bursaries did not cover tuition fees and that the system in the Netherlands applied to all its universities and other higher educational institutes, whether State-run or not, which was not the case in all countries. It was clear, therefore, that the letter did not adequately reflect the true situation in the countries mentioned.

29. Generally speaking, the comprehensive system of student grants and bursaries opened up the possibility for each and every person in the Netherlands to pursue all forms of higher education provided they met the educational requirements, and later to reap the rewards. It was not unreasonable, therefore, to expect them to invest in their own future.

30. Part of the answer to Mr. Adekuoye's questions was that for the past 10 to 15 years, successive Netherlands governments had cut spending, following a situation in which the amount of government spending and the demand which it had placed on the capital market to finance it had resulted in high individual taxation levels, which had threatened to endanger the economy. Government spending could not be allowed to get out of hand, so that there could be no automatic link between the health of the economy and the charging of tuition fees.

31. The amount of money going into education, and especially higher education, was considerable and a balance had to be struck between the rights and aspirations of individuals and the willingness of society to pay for them. For that reason the Netherlands believed that education should be targeted. As he understood it, the German system of free education was also currently under review, because of the tendency among young people to stay on in the educational system rather than try and enter a difficult labour market.

32. Mr. van RIJSSEN (Netherlands) said that although it might appear from the cost of tuition fees that the Netherlands Government was not working towards free education, due account should be taken of the progressive introduction of the system of student loans, grants and scholarships available to every student, which made it possible for more people to further their education, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds.

33. It was clear from the fact that the budget of the Ministry of Education had been among the highest of all the ministries for the past 20 years that

the Netherlands made a very large investment in education, particularly for a society in which the number of students was diminishing due to the decrease in the size of the population of student age.

34. It was also important to bear in mind that students on grants were non-productive members of society for a number of years, living at the expense of the taxpayer. A medical student, for example, cost some 75,000 guilders per year to train and other types of studies were even more costly. The relatively small cost borne by the student was therefore an investment which encouraged the student to be responsible for his choice of studies and, ultimately, to become a responsible citizen.

35. Many of the Committee's questions required statistics, which would have to be provided at a later stage.

36. With regard to the question concerning older students, there was no upper age limit in any form of education in the Netherlands. However, the grant system was not available beyond the age of 27, so that any studies undertaken thereafter had to be self-financed.

37. On the question raised by Mr. Sadi, in the State school system, religious education for any denomination could be provided if the student so wished. As the parastatal schools were in any case denominational, for the most part Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and, increasingly, Islamic, their education was in part religion-based, although no student was obliged to participate in religious education against his or her will. Those schools had exactly the same status as the State schools and had the same financial support. A further subsidy could be made available if the school met the required educational standard.

38. In urban areas in particular, where there was a concentration of people belonging to non-Christian religions, religious education was provided on a subsidized basis. Special educational programmes had been developed over the past 20 years in order to make all students aware of the country's cultural diversity. Human rights education was also available in all schools, and the Ministry of Education had developed interactive educational programmes for secondary schools on human rights and on the United Nations human rights machinery.

39. Mr. GRISSA said that in the United States a poor child would never be deprived of education, even at the best universities or other higher educational institutes. Could a person in the Netherlands be deprived of education through lack of means even if he or she had the necessary educational qualifications?

40. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands) replied that although that was a matter of concern, the Government's policy was, through its grants and loans system, to guarantee the possibility for all individuals to continue their education. It required them to make an investment, but ensured that they were not forced out of education for economic reasons.

41. The Government in particular sought to support and help early school leavers to pursue their education to the extent possible, in order to prevent

them from becoming long-term unemployed. That was where the Government should focus its attention. People did not drop out of education at the age of 16 because fees became payable. They dropped out much earlier and for a variety of reasons.

Article 15

42. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO asked whether the subsidies included in the Arts Plan referred to in paragraph 359 of the report were for the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a whole or whether there were separate subsidies for the Antilles and Aruba. He also asked whether the fixed price for books referred to in paragraph 369 was set by the central Government. Were any figures available for the number of readers in the Netherlands? Lastly, he asked whether there were any special difficulties in applying the criteria for resource allocation set out in paragraph 366.

43. Ms. BONOAN-DANDAN asked, in connection with the role of the media in moulding the attitudes of young people, what kind of stereotypes were prevalent in the Netherlands in regard to women. Were there any government programmes to promote a more gender-sensitive approach in the print and broadcast media? With regard to pornography, had any kind of self-regulating mechanism been established among broadcasters, cinema producers and the manufacturers of video materials?

44. Mr. WIMER asked what proportion of television broadcasting was set aside for cultural or educational purposes.

45. Ms. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether there were any arrangements to enable the elderly or disabled to attend museums, galleries, concerts and other cultural events at reduced prices. Were sites of cultural events made physically accessible to the disabled?

46. Mr. van RIJSSEN (Netherlands) said in response to questions about discrimination by television and the other mass media, that efforts were being made to prevent it. However, it was not until something had actually been broadcast or printed that the Government could decide that it constituted discrimination. In those instances where the Government found that discrimination had taken place, it was prosecuted under the relevant legislation. The Government could, of course, exert an influence in other ways. For example, there was a subsidized public television and radio system, in which a certain amount of programming time was set aside for culture and education.

47. The private networks executed some degree of self-regulation. However, if the Government was dissatisfied, it had only one means of action against the broadcaster. An important but rarely used system existed whereby journalists in print and television could be reprimanded for non-ethical behaviour and permission for air-time withdrawn. Such action was very rare, however, because of the need to protect freedom of speech. As far as educational broadcasting on television and radio was concerned, he could report that educational programmes were broadcast every morning by the three public television networks. The programmes were mainly for use in schools, but some were directed to children at home. There were also government

subsidies for educational programmes and for the production of video cassettes for use in schools. He would provide more exact figures for the amount of educational programming at the next meeting.

48. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands) said that there was a system of special passes for persons over 60 or 65 entitling them to reduced prices for cultural events and transportation. Making premises such as museums and theatres accessible to the disabled was a priority issue in social policy and government subsidies were available for the necessary alterations. Regarding the number of readers, he would see if any reliable data were available and, if so, he would convey them at the next meeting.

49. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN reiterated her question about gender sensitivity. Were there any government programmes to encourage it, in print and on television, and particularly in advertising?

50. Mr. AHMED asked what the Government's policy was on taxing television sets.

51. Mr. GRISSA said that the Netherlands lay at the crossroads of broadcasting by a multitude of television networks. Domestic laws did not apply, however, to broadcasting from outside the country. What steps could the Government take to protect its citizens for example, against a pornographic channel broadcasting from abroad?

52. Mr. AHMED said that the prevalence of satellite antennas made it virtually impossible for any country to exercise control.

53. Mr. van RIJSSEN (Netherlands) said that it was true that little could be done. However, satellites were not so prevalent in the Netherlands, where most houses were hooked up to a dense, low-cost cable network. He noted that a European Community Directive had been issued regarding what was admissible or otherwise on television. If a programme was broadcast in the Netherlands that was pornographic under Dutch law, the broadcaster could be prosecuted. However, the Government could only act after the fact: there was no prior censorship.

54. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands) said that the only tax on actual television sets was the sales tax included in the price. However, anybody owning a set had to pay a tax of about US$ 100 a year. The money went to the public broadcasting system, which ran several channels.

55. Mr. AHMED asked whether the Netherlands engaged in any cultural exchanges with its neighbours. For example, were there any programmes for graduate exchanges with foreign universities? He also asked whether the study of foreign languages was obligatory, and if so, which languages were most commonly taught in secondary schools.

56. Mr. POTMAN (Netherlands) said that there were graduate exchange programmes organized and run by the universities. In regard to foreign languages, the study of English was compulsory and a further two foreign languages were offered. Those most usually available were French, German and Spanish.

57. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee would halt its consideration of the report of the Netherlands on the European part of the Kingdom, pending the provision of the further statistical information that had been requested. He invited the Committee to proceed to the consideration of the report on the Netherlands Antilles.

Second periodic report of the Netherlands Antilles

58. Mr. CORION (Netherlands Antilles) said that the last few years had been extremely difficult for the Netherlands Antilles. The rapid increase in the debts of the central Government and of the five island territories had led to the introduction of a structural adjustment programme, which had caused the Antillean community as a whole much pain.

59. Despite many sacrifices and the introduction of an emergency social programme, the Government continued to face many challenges. On most of the islands, the number of unemployed had increased in both the private and public sectors. The two hurricanes experienced in 1996 had had an enormous negative impact, on among other things the labour market of Saint Martin. That island's three major hotels were still non-operational. To cope with the situation, the island Government was working in collaboration with a private firm to encourage the unemployed to follow training programmes, matching suitable candidates with the vacancies registered. That pilot project was intended to enhance the working relationship between government and the business sector as well as to alleviate the pressure on the labour market.

60. In the field of health insurance, the extension of insurance to family members in 1996 had helped to ease the public need in that respect. Health Services had been improved through transfer to the districts of the islands. Because of the ageing of the population, premiums for the general old-age insurance system were being reconsidered. The health insurance law was also to be amended, in order to enable persons over 60 without health insurance to be insured under the old-age system.

61. On the largest island, Curaçao, an ordinance concerning temporary employment agencies had entered into force. Another ordinance, designed to promote employment for young job-seekers between the ages of 18 and 30 who were unemployed for longer than one year, was not yet in force, but was due to come into effect in the course of the year. Employers' and workers' organizations in the Antilles had worked more closely together in recent years to solve the problems of the labour market. A committee had been established on labour productivity, for example, and the safety inspection section of the Department of Labour and Social Affairs had been reinforced.

62. In 1995, the Government had established a Department for Well Being, Family and Humanitarian Affairs. The Department's official policy emphasized the upbringing of children. To advance that policy, a non-governmental organization operating in the Antillean community, engaged in each parental support activities as training and guidance to teenage mothers, had been granted a two-year subsidiary. A bill passed in 1997 provided for increased maternity leave and higher compensation for salary loss for all women insured under the Antillean system. In 1997, a bill had been introduced providing for the adjudication of alimony in respect of long-term common law relationships.

63. A permanent committee had been established to tackle population issues more effectively. The national report which that inter-departmental committee had produced in 1994 was currently being updated. The new report contained demographic information as well as policy recommendations and strategies for a national plan of action. The views of the people of the Netherlands Antilles regarding population issues and policies were to be investigated by the permanent committee by means of a questionnaire currently being prepared.

64. The Antilles, like all countries, was experiencing strong pressure from globalization. Under that pressure, it was becoming increasingly aware that education would be a key factor in keeping pace with development. Equality was still the driving force of its policy in that respect. The primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the educational system were all to be reformed. The foundation of the reform would be a strengthening of the primary level, in order to improve the performance of the second and tertiary levels. The reform of the primary level was far-reaching, with the teaching of Papiamento and English as a key factor and with serious attention being paid to the main foreign languages. The aim was to give children between 4 and 15 years of age, over a 10-year period, a solid foundation in the core skills that would enable them to function in a modern society.

65. Teacher-training was also to be reformed and working conditions for the profession improved. At the secondary level, reforms would be carried out in both vocational and general education, with a view to facilitating the adjustment between school and the workplace required by economic, social and technological developments in society. The integration of vocational and secondary education would be a key aspect. Every effort was made to ensure that all children made use of their right to receive good quality education. Accordingly, a campaign was currently in effect to prevent truancy. In addition, a task force was conducting a broad-ranging programme among young people beyond the age of compulsory education to prevent the growing number of drop-outs. In combination with other agencies, the task force was offering new opportunities in the field of adult and continuing education.

66. After those remarks he looked forward to a constructive dialogue with the members of the Committee. His delegation would welcome any suggestion that would help the Government in its efforts to implement further the provisions of the Covenant.

Articles 1 to 5

67. The CHAIRPERSON invited members of the Committee to put questions and comments to the delegation concerning articles 1 to 5, which did not figure in the list of issues.

68. Ms. BONOAN-DANDAN requested the Government to describe any measures it had established to ensure equality for men and women in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, particularly the right to work.

69. Mr. ANTANOVICH inquired whether the unemployment rate quoted by the delegation applied only to nationals of the Netherlands Antilles, or also to foreign nationals. What rate applied to citizens, and what rate applied to other residents?

70. Mr. CEVILLE inquired whether the provisions of the Covenant could be invoked before the courts of the Netherlands Antilles.

71. Mr. GRISSA inquired whether the 40 nationalities mentioned by the delegation were foreigners, or nationals of the Antilles of varied ethnic origins.

72. The CHAIRPERSON inquired what the relationship was between the legal systems of the Antilles and Aruba and that of the Netherlands, and whether one was subordinate to the other. Did the judiciary or the legislature of the Netherlands wield constitutional control over the legislature of the Antilles? Were the nationals of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles citizens both of their own countries and of the Netherlands, and could they invoke that instrument in the defence of their rights and freedoms?

73. If the Antilles and Aruba were independent in the administrative and legal sense, the question arose whether the Government of the Netherlands was enabled to take measures to ensure the implementation of the Covenant in those countries. In particular, if the Committee deemed that a law in force in the Antilles, for example, contravened the terms of the Covenant, to what entity should it address its concern? It would be useful to know what the powers of the State party were with regard to legislative measures taken in the Antilles, and, conversely, whether the Antilles could take action to fulfil obligations under the Covenant if it deemed that a Netherlands law contravened that instrument.

74. Mr. CORION (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands Antilles was an immigrant community, made up of the nationals of many countries who had settled there in the 1940s and 1950s and who had retained their own nationalities and religions. His father, for instance, had a British passport, but since he had been born in the Antilles before 1950, he was a Dutch citizen.

75. The unemployment rate of 15.3 per cent covered all citizens and foreigners legally residing in the Antilles. Most foreigners living in Antilles held jobs, since without a job a residency permit could not be acquired. There were, in addition, many citizens of the Dominican Republic and Haiti who had entered as tourists and had remained illegally; some were working, others not.

76. In principle, all employment opportunities were available equally to men and women, in accordance with their qualifications, and vacancies were advertised without reference to sex. In the past, women holding the same government jobs as men had been paid 20 per cent less, but that was no longer the case.

77. The Netherlands Antilles had inherited its legal system from the Dutch, and their legislation was similar. Nationals of the Antilles and Aruba were Dutch, and held Dutch passports. Although nationals of the Antilles and Aruba could choose to resettle in the European part of the Kingdom, the European Dutch were not free to do the same in reverse. That decision, more administrative than political, had been set in place to protect jobs in Aruba and the Antilles; how long it would hold was uncertain.

78. Ms. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO inquired whether, in the view of the delegation, the Family Code and the Penal Code contained provisions that were discriminatory against women.

79. Mr. GRISSA inquired whether the Netherlands Antilles had its own legislature.

80. Mr. ADEKUOYE asked whether the European Dutch were required to obtain a visa or work permit in order to enter the Netherlands Antilles or Aruba.

81. Mr. van RIJSSEN (Netherlands) explained that the Kingdom of the Netherlands consisted of four Governments; the first three were that of Aruba, that of the Netherlands Antilles, and that of the European part of the Netherlands. Each of those had its own parliament, elected by its own people. The fourth Government was that of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which was constituted in the Hague, and on whose Cabinet the three parts of the Kingdom were represented. It dealt with matters involving the combined interests of the three parts of the Kingdom, such as foreign affairs and defence of the realm. If the Committee deemed that any part of the Kingdom was in breach of the Covenant, it should address itself to the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Hague; if the violation applied to only one of the three parts, then the Government would take up the matter with the Government of that part. The Kingdom functioned much like a confederation.

82. Mr. CORION (Netherlands) said that the Parliament of the Antilles had been constituted in 1954, and had inherited the legislative arrangements of the Netherlands. Since that time, it had gradually been adapting those laws to the realities of life in the Antilles. The European Dutch were obliged to show their passports on entering the Antilles, and required permits in order to work.

83. Mr. AHMED inquired why large numbers of nationals of the Netherlands Antilles did not choose to resettle in Europe.

84. Mr. CORION said that not many people would choose to abandon their homes for another country more than 10,000 kilometres away. The cold climate was also a prohibitive factor.

85. Mr. ADEKUOYE inquired whether the Dutch guider was the currency of Aruba and the Antilles.

86. Mr. PILLAY said that a reading of the report of the Netherlands suggested that economic, social and cultural rights were enjoyed to a lesser extent in the Netherlands Antilles than in the European part of the Kingdom. Surely the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was responsible for ensuring that persons living in all parts of the Kingdom enjoyed the same rights, or did the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands consider that the responsibility lay with the Government of the Netherlands Antilles?

Article 6

87. Mr. ANTANOVICH said that Dutch citizens from the Antilles were perhaps reluctant to resettle in the European part of the Kingdom because of the high unemployment rate. What was meant by the statement contained in paragraph 10 of the report to the effect that the Government had adopted a policy which sought to promote flexibility in the labour market? It would be useful to know what measures, if any, the Government had undertaken to educate or re-educate unemployed young people.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.